

BX 7255

.B7 S72

Copy 1



**BX**

7255

B7S72

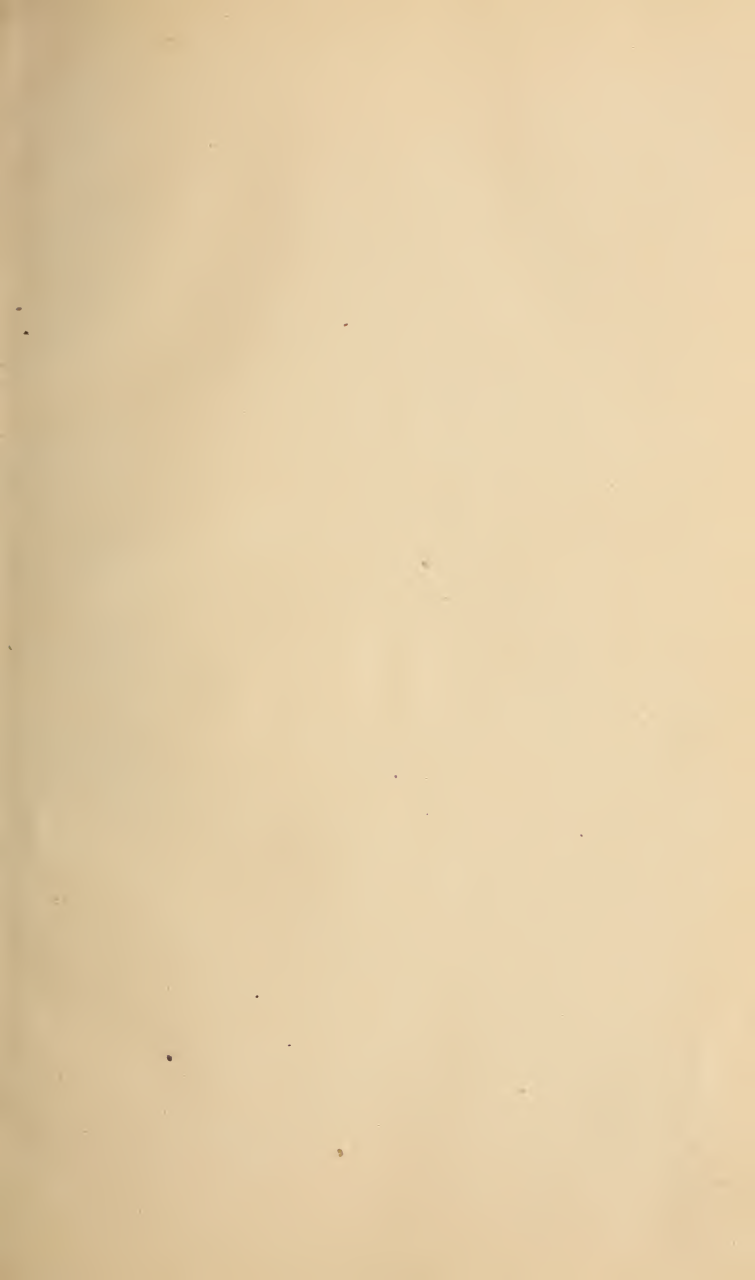
4 <sup>17</sup> /

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

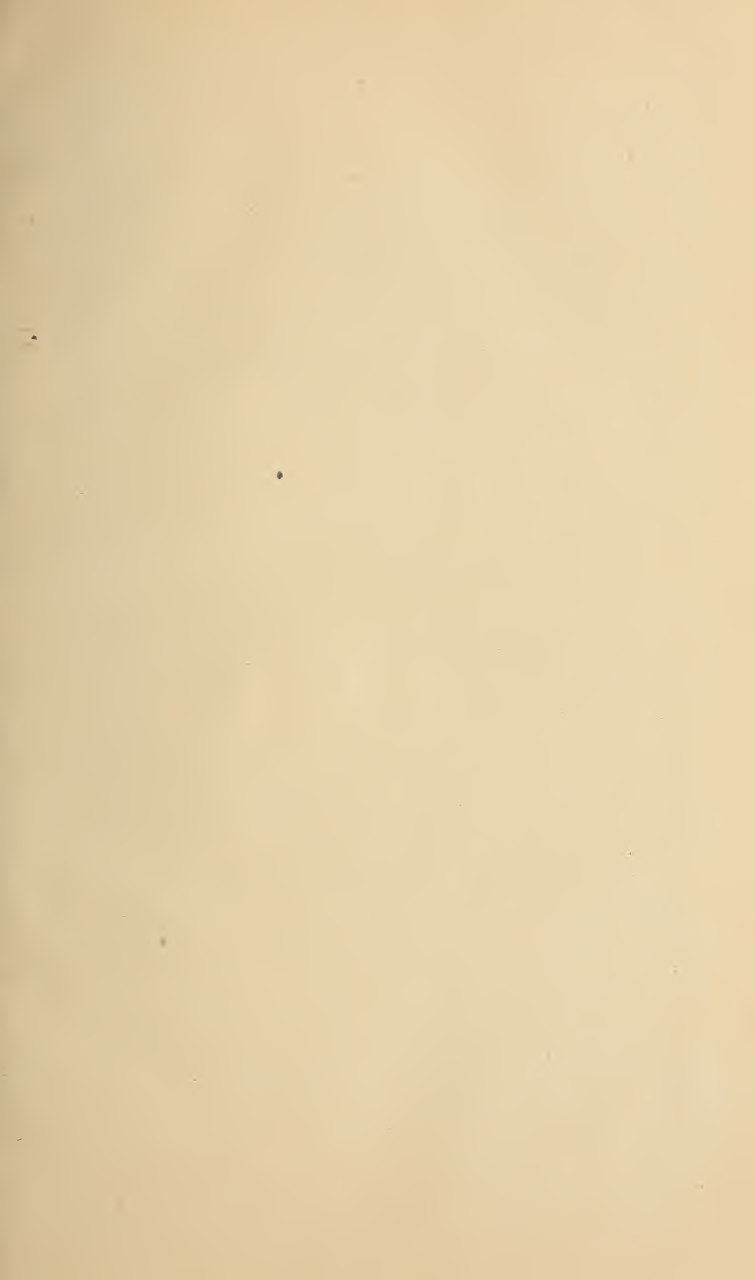
*Chap.*... BX 72.55

*Shelf*... B7572

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











1 Sen J. Fells  
with the winter's love

AN

# HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

PREACHED TO THE

SOUTH EVANGELICAL CHURCH,

WEST ROXBURY,

JUNE 10, 1860,

BY

THOMAS LAURIE, PASTOR.

*Psm. 145:4.* One generation shall praise thy work to another.

BOSTON:  
PRINTED BY S. O. THAYER, OVER BOYLSTON MARKET,  
1861.





AN  
HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

PREACHED TO THE

SOUTH EVANGELICAL CHURCH,  
WEST ROXBURY,

JUNE 10, 1860,

BY



THOMAS LAURIE, PASTOR.

*Psm.* 145:4. One generation shall praise thy work to another.

---

BOSTON:  
PRINTED BY S. O. THAYER, OVER BOYLSTON MARKET,  
1861.

BX7255

.B7572

LC Control Number



tmp96 031705

## HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

---

Thou hast seen how that the Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place. *Deut. 1:31.*

THIS Church is twenty-five years old to-morrow, having been organized June 11, 1835, and, though in the case of such a little Benjamin among the thousands of Israel, it would be out of place to make a great parade on the occasion, yet it seems proper to recount the dealings of God with us in the past, and make grateful mention of his kindness to us in the feebleness of our infancy.

Moses addressing Israel on the plains of Moab after the perils of the desert, reminds them that all through that desert God had carried them in his arms as a father carries his child along the path too difficult for his little feet to tread alone. It is a lovely picture. What heart can look on it and not be touched with its delineation of the tender love of our Father who is in Heaven. But it is only one of man employed to set forth the same loving kindness, and yet all together failing to do justice to a love which passeth knowledge.

Already at Horeb God had said to his people, "ye have seen how I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself," and some of those royal birds sailing

serenely above those granite peaks may have illustrated the beauty of these words of the Lord, while they were being uttered by his servant Moses.

And now on these plains beyond Jordan, it must have been interesting to recall events that had occurred within the memory of some that heard him; and as memory reviewed a past unlike that of any other people, with what power must the words have come home to their hearts: "The Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son in all the way that ye went until ye came into this place."

But few among the thousands whom Moses addressed could go back to the beginning of their desert journey; and so now, though this church has existed only a little more than half the period reviewed by the Hebrew Lawgiver, yet the memory of our feeble beginnings are fast fading away. Few of the original actors survive. The Leader through whom God blessed us in the day of small things has gone to his reward, and it is left to a stranger who took no part in them, to glean the few facts still within reach, ere they pass into oblivion. If the sketch is imperfect, you will bear in mind, that it was gathered from various sources, a fragment here and another there, and then fitted together simply that God's care of us in our weakness might not be forgotten, but prepare us to trust him with a firmer confidence for time to come. As it is written, "He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord."

Let us commence with a brief allusion to the early history of religion in the town, for in recording a few facts concerning the early days of a younger sister, it seems exclusive to omit all mention of the rest of the family.

The first Church in Roxbury (now Dr. Putnam's) was organized in 1632, twelve years after the landing of the Pilgrims, and two hundred and three years before the formation of our own. It commenced with only seventeen male members, dismissed from the church in Dorchester, and according to the custom of those days had both a Pastor and a Teacher: Thomas Weld filling the first office and the celebrated John Eliot the second. We have only time to notice that the united pastorate of Mr. Eliot and his successor, Nehemiah Walter, amounted to one hundred and twenty years, each of them having labored not far from sixty years, a fact which perhaps has few parallels in either ancient or modern history.

The second church was formed in what is now West Roxbury, and not far from the territorial centre of the town, November 2d, 1712, about eighty years after the first. Their meeting house stood on Walter street, a name perhaps strange to most of you, for it is now an old road very little used and as little cared for by the town, though within the memory of some now living it was a main thoroughfare to Boston. It extends from the residence of Mr. Skinner on South street, to Bussey street, and the old grave yard formerly connected with the meeting house, is the only memorial left to designate the spot. In 1852 I attended the funeral of an old lady



(Elizabeth Richards, aged ninety-six,) who used to attend meeting there in early life, though the building was not used for church purposes after 1773. Rev. Ebenezer Thayer (ordained 1712, deceased 1733) was the first Pastor in this church, and as an old volume of his sermons entitled "Christ the great subject of Gospel preaching" has fallen into my hands, I propose to read one of them this afternoon that you may see what sort of preaching West Roxbury enjoyed one hundred and forty years ago. \*

At present hear the covenant, signed by Mr. Thayer and seventeen others at the organization of the church. I do not need to read the Confession of Faith, for at that time the Westminster (1647) and Boston (1680) Confessions were the Articles of Faith of our churches, documents much more full and explicit than the creeds of our day, and well worthy the careful study of you all.

The covenant is laid before you not merely to attest the orthodoxy of that early church—for the discourse of the afternoon will leave nothing to be desired on that score—but because it presents such a beautiful instance of christians caring for their children as well as for

\* The title page of the volume is as follows: "Christ the great subject of Gospel preaching, and matter of great joy to all whom he is preached unto, being the substance of several Sermons, from Acts 8:5 and 8; whereunto are added practical reflections on the first and last days of the year 1731. By Ebenezer Thayer, Pastor of a Church in Roxbury. Luke 2:10 and 11.—Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy for unto you is born a Saviour which is *Christ the Lord*. Boston, printed by S. Kneeland, for S. Gerrish and D. Henchman, and sold at their shops, MDCCXXI."

The volume contains 12 Sermons, with an Epistle to the reader, by Nehemiah Walter, of the first Church, and a dedication to the second Church by their Pastor, both dated May 28, 1722. It is much to be desired that these twelve discourses could be published, that men might know on what kind of spiritual food their fathers fed more than four generations ago. The sermon preached in the afternoon was the first in the series, and it is due to Mr. Thayer to say that it was received with unusual attention and marked satisfaction.



themselves. The religious horizon of West Roxbury brightened up before me when I first read this covenant of the Fathers, and it will be one of the instructive lessons of heaven to trace out its results in the children and the children's children of those who entered into it in spirit and in truth. But let the document speak for itself:—

“We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, apprehending ourselves called of God to join together in Church Communion—acknowledging ourselves unworthy of such a privilege and our inability to keep covenant with God, or to perform any spiritual duty, unless Christ shall enable us thereunto—in humble dependance on divine grace for divine assistance and acceptance, we do in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord freely covenant, and bind ourselves solemnly in the presence of God himself, his holy angels and all his servants here present, to serve the God whose name alone is Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the only true and living God, cleaving to Him as our chief good, and unto our Lord Jesus Christ as our only Saviour, Prophet, Priest and King of our souls, in a way of Gospel obedience avouching the Lord to be our God and the God of our children, whom we give unto him, counting it as a high favor that the Lord will accept of us and our children with us to be his people.

We do also give ourselves to one another in the Lord, covenanting to walk together as a Church of Christ in all the ways of his worship according to the rules of his holy word, promising in brotherly love faithfully to watch over one another's souls, and to submit ourselves to the discipline and power of Christ in his Church,\* and duly attend to the seals and censures, or whatever ordinances Christ has commanded to be observed by his people, so far as the Lord by his word and spirit hath or shall reveal unto us to be our duty, beseech-

\* I cannot pass that sentence without expressing my heart's desire and prayer to God for all the members of our churches, that they would keep in mind in transacting church business that it is not the discipline of man but of Christ, about which they are engaged. If this truth was always borne in mind how would Zion arise, her light being come and the glory of the Lord being risen upon her.

ing the Lord to own us for his people and to delight to dwell in the midst of us.

And that we may keep our covenant with God, we desire to deny ourselves and to depend wholly on the free mercy of God and upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and wherein we shall fail, to wait upon him, for pardon through his name, beseeching the Lord to own us as a church of Christ, and to delight to abide in the midst of us. Amen."

Such was the first covenant the people of God in this place entered into with the Lord, and with one another. \*

In December 1770, a third Church was formed in Jamaica Plain, with Wm. Gordon for its Pastor; settled July 1772. The second Church after this, left the old meeting house in Walter St., and erected the one now occupied by them, in 1773. At first it was without a spire, but the present neat and well proportioned one was added in 1822.

We have seen how sound in the Faith both the first and second Churches were at their beginnings. It is sad however to note the gradual decay of vital piety and evangelical doctrine, that, commencing previous to the Revolution, went on through the latter part of the last century until in the early part of the present, it is to be feared that the Gospel of Salvation through the Atonement of a Divine Redeemer was not preached anywhere in Roxbury. We will say nothing of neighboring towns, for our business at present is with our own.

The first standard lifted up against this general declension was by the Baptist Church in Dudley Street,

\* This covenant was copied from the original records of the Church, which was kindly lent to me by those having them in charge, to ascertain another point, and it is used in this discourse in accordance with their obliging permission to make such use of it as I saw fit.

organized in 1821, and that stood alone for thirteen years, until the Eliot Church joined it in bearing testimony for the truth, Sept. 18, 1834. Our own little church was the third of the cloud of witnesses that now preach Jesus Christ and him crucified as the only ground of hope for sinners.

It is interesting to trace out the manner in which Providence opened the way for the establishment of this Church, for it furnishes a beautiful illustration of the truth that God is never at a loss for an instrument, and that often he chooses the most unlikely agencies to accomplish his designs.

A young woman from W. Roxbury named Rebecca Jordan, lived in the family of Dr. Burgess, at Dedham, and a little girl of her acquaintance, Mary Whiting by name, used to go from West Roxbury to visit her on the Sabbath. The visitor was induced to go to meeting, and became quite interested in what she heard. Not content with going herself she tried to persuade her friends at home to go too. But in this she was at first doomed to disappointment; for her father, who was noted for his harshness, peremptorily forbade her visits to Dedham, and threatened to punish her if she persisted. Poor Mary was for a time in great distress; but God opened the way for her in a manner she did not anticipate. Her father and grand-father both died, and left the family without any one to carry on the farm. To remedy this evil her grandmother sent for Mr. Aaron Cass, who had married little Mary's aunt, and removed to New Hampshire, to come and live with her and take care of the estate. He

came; and now Mary could not only go to meeting herself, but succeeded in inducing all the family to go with her. The result was that all four of them joined the church in Dedham—three generations entering the fold at once. Years passed by, and on Sabbath evening, August 26, 1832, Mrs. Whiting opened her house for preaching. Dr. Wheaton of Dedham opened the meeting with prayer, and Mr. Peabody, a student in the Newton Theological Seminary, preached the sermon. The latter, with the aid of several of his fellow students, and once at least of Rev. Mr. Grafton the Baptist Minister of Newton, continued the meetings for thirteen successive Sabbath evenings. The death of Mrs. Cass then interrupted them, although the attendance which was small at first had increased every week until they closed.

The meetings were not resumed again that winter, probably because that while they had been conducted by Baptist students; the church members who attended them, with one exception, were Congregationalists.

The large attendance also had shown the need of a larger room than could be found in a private house, and in March 1833, we find the Hall that formerly occupied the second story of the old building across the street, rented for \$12 per annum, and fitted up for public worship at an expense of \$25. The accommodations were of the most primitive description. A plain standing desk, that may still be seen in the basement below this church, served for a pulpit, and benches without backs furnished seats for the audience. Still they could boast a choir with a bass viol, and a subscription of \$126.50

by twenty-eight persons in sums varying from 50 cts. to \$30, to meet the expenses of the year. This last however seems to have grown out of the commencement of Dr. Burgess' labors among them, for, Sabbath evening, April 14th, he preached his first sermon in the Hall to a congregation of about 50, from Rev. 22:17, last clause, "whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely," and ten days later we find the subscription paper with the following heading :

"We, the subscribers, who wish well to good order and religion, feel ourselves under the greatest obligations to Rev. Mr. Burgess for his labor with us and his desire for our prosperity and everlasting happiness ; we therefore wish that our meeting may be continued, and we do as members feel satisfied and willing to give the following sum :"

Ten of the twenty-eight subscribers were members of Dr. Burgess' church, and he very judiciously charged \$68.04 for his labors during the year, that they might feel that the undertaking was their own, and at the same time form those habits of giving, without which it could not be carried on.

His own account of his labors, in a letter dated March 21, 1860, is as follows :

"Ten or twenty of the members of my church, chiefly females, being residents in that vicinity, desired some lectures in a hall once celebrated for dancing. Mr. A. Cass, and the late Capt. Edward Richards were the prominent men. I preached in person every Sabbath evening for one year as if to my own people. A cloud of glory overshadowed us: some few were converted and others comforted and confirmed. The Lord planted the vine; He has watered it, and to Him be the praise."

The Dr. however was in error on one point, for a



MS. journal, kept at the time by a member of this church, gives the names of Dr. Cogswell, Dr. Beecher, Dr. Codman, Rev. Mr. Stearns, Rev. Mr. Bliss and other neighboring pastors as having occupied Dr. Burgess' place on different Sabbath evenings during the year. Among them was the future pastor of the church, who preached his first sermon here in January 1834.

The people were so well satisfied with Dr. Burgess' labors, that Feb. 24, 1834, they made another subscription with the following heading:

"We, the subscribers, believe that the public worship of God, and institutions of piety, religion and morality, promote the prosperity of a people and the security of a Republican government. As one year will close with the first Sunday in April since the meeting commenced, we do therefore feel satisfied and willing to give the following sums set to our names to have it continued, commencing the second Sunday in April."

This heading is copied in full, because it affords such an insight either into the personal feelings of the man who wrote it, or the motives he deemed likely to have most weight with others. We shall see other motives set forth however in the next document. The subscription by fifty individuals amounts to \$212.75, showing an increase of twenty-two names and \$98.25 over the preceeding one.

On April 21, 1834, eight persons "signed off" from the Unitarian Society of the second Parish, and on the same day twenty-two persons signed the following document, of whom nine afterwards became members of the church.

"We, the subscribers, feeling the necessity of hearing the

Gospel preached in its purity, as it was taught by Christ and his Apostles, and as it was formerly believed and taught in this place by our forefathers, and that we may not be compelled to go out of town to meeting, hereby agree to form ourselves into a society by the name of the West Roxbury Evangelical Society for the purpose above named."

This original name of the Society is the same afterwards adopted in 1854 except that in the last the word "South" is added to distinguish it from other Evangelical societies now existing in the town.

In this connexion it seems proper to make mention of the favor which God inclined Dr. Burgess to show to us in the days of our weakness; though justice to him requires me to state that when applied to for the facts, he very modestly declined to give them, saying:

"I think that a curtain had better rest over the pecuniary part of the whole work; the faith and prayer are of more value. We always considered the church in West Roxbury as a colony from the first church in Dedham, (thirteen out of the original twenty-five members of this church were from his) and our plan was that the parent should help the child if necessary, and that no help should be asked from the Home Missionary Society, or any other body, or individuals, except in the building of the edifice."

I learn however from other sources, that in accordance with this generous plan, Dr. Burgess gave \$300 in 1834, \$250 in 1835, \$200 in 1836 and so on, diminishing \$50 every year, intending to stop when in this manner it had come down to nothing. But subsequently he commenced again at \$150 diminishing as before, and on various occa-

sions added more, until the sum total of his benefactions to this church must have exceeded \$1500.00. Such christian kindness ought not to be forgotten. It is not always that neighboring pastors give so freely both of their members and their means to the infant churches that grow up round about them. Yet while we thus make grateful mention of the friend of our early days, let us not forget who gave him both the disposition and the power to help us, and let us join him in his devout acknowledgment, "The Lord planted the vine, He has watered it and to Him be the praise." Surely when we think of the spiritual mercies vouchsafed over and above these temporal favors, of the prayers indited by the spirit and answered of the Father for the sake of his beloved son, of the souls that here have been created anew in Christ Jesus and are now either honoring their Saviour on earth or adoring him in heaven, we may well say that "in the wilderness we have seen how the Lord our God bare us as a man doth bear his son in all the way that we have journeyed until we came into this place."

It ought also to be recorded here with gratitude, that owing to this generous aid from a neighboring pastor the whole amount received from the Home Missionary Society during the protracted struggles of this church was only \$650, and none of that previous to 1841.

But it is time to turn to the labors of our first pastor, the Rev. Christopher Marsh. He came here in the fortieth year of his age, a man of robust health and "great practical wisdom," having already made full proof



of his ministry first at Sanford and then at Biddeford in Maine. He labored here, with the exception of the two years that he spent as a Sabbath School agent, from 1834 to 1851, and it is an interesting fact that in his old age, God led him back to the scene of his earliest labors, to find the children he had baptized in infancy, office bearers in the church, and then to go home from amid the rejoicings of a new harvest of souls, that he gathered in for Christ.

On his first arrival here, he was received with open arms by Mr. Edward Richards, whose name deserves honorable mention among the founders of this church. The first year he gave Mr. Marsh his house rent, (\$65) and \$40 beside, and his minister occupied the same house, while he continued the liberality of that first year, down to the time of his death in 1847. What renders this the more remarkable is that he was not a church member when Mr. Marsh came, nor had he received any training in christian benevolence. It was the spontaneous outflow of a heart naturally generous, and already under the influence of the spirit of God. We are not surprised to find such a man applying for admission at the first communion season, and undeterred by discouragement received before the second. Well might his pastor speak of him as a man whom God had raised up to foster the feeble beginnings of this church, one without whom—humanly speaking—it could not have been established; rather, he was privileged to do so much for it, by him who might have selected another, in whom to show forth the same operation of his heavenly grace.

Mr. Marsh commenced preaching in the Hall on Sabbath evening, April 7, 1834, and on May 11th of the same year, began regular services there during the day. But so few were present the first time—about 30 adults and as many children—that he was almost discouraged, and though the congregation slowly increased yet it was long before it could compare with the previous attendance in the evening.

It is a further illustration of the intimate relations of this church to the first church in Dedham, that during this year Mr. Marsh usually preached a part of each Sabbath in Dedham and Dr. Burgess in West Roxbury.

The first Sabbath School was held on the afternoon of May 18th, with Dr. Samuel Gould as Superintendant. The number of teachers or scholars cannot now be ascertained. Dr. Gould, though of a retiring disposition, seems to have been a man of sterling piety, and in his own quiet unobtrusive way rendered important service to the church.

The first monthly concert was observed on Monday evening, July 7th, and the first benevolent contribution of this church was \$8.65 to the A. B. C. F. M., according to a receipt dated Sept. 3, 1834, marked "No. 1," in the handwriting of Mr. Marsh, and signed by Dr. Burgess as Treasurer of the Foreign Missionary Society of Norfolk County.

The first legal meeting of the Parish was held April 10, 1835, when Wm. S. Keith was chosen Clerk, and Dr. S. Gould, Moderator. Previous to this, several meetings had been held with reference to the formation of a

church, which resulted in its organization June 11th of the same year. The services were held in the Hall, and the sermon was preached by G. W. Blagden, D. D., then of Salem street, Boston, Dr. Burgess very appropriately giving the fellowship of the churches to their younger sister. Eighteen persons brought letters from other churches, and seven entered into covenant for the first time, making a little band of twenty-five in all, which before the end of the year increased to thirty-three.

The first member of this church who was called home to the general assembly and church of the first born, was Mrs. Elizabeth Hobart, who died August 27, a little more than two months and a half after the organization of the church, and there are some facts in her history that claim a grateful mention in this connection. Her oldest son, when he was a boy ten years of age, heard an unusual noise up stairs one morning as of persons engaged in earnest conversation; he listened, but could not hear what was said, and thought no more of it until next morning at the same hour he noticed his mother go up stairs, and very soon the same sounds were heard again. Child-like, his curiosity was excited, and creeping softly to the door of the chamber where his mother was, he heard her wrestling in prayer for each of her nine children by name, and then for her husband and all of them together. The burden of her prayer was "not earthly good, but salvation and eternal life for Jesus' sake." He had never known of such a thing before, and was so overcome by what he had heard that he went out and spent most of the forenoon alone in tears, nor could

he get rid of the feelings then awakened, until eleven years after, he came to Christ and joined the church in Park street, Boston. His father united with the same church, and now of the nine children of that praying mother, eight have been converted, and the ninth is a regular attendant on one of the sanctuaries where his mother worshipped God. Three out of the four children of her eldest son are also members of the church. How much the prayer of their godly grandmother had to do with their conversion, will be made known in that day when the secret channels of grace shall all be laid open. Two of her children have already followed her into rest. But when one of her sons came not long since to the little graveyard close by, to remove the remains of his mother to his own tomb in Forest Hill Cemetery, such changes had taken place in the vault where they were deposited, that they could not be identified; yet that "body being still united to Christ doth rest in its grave till the Resurrection," and while her soul is present with the Lord, the streams of holy influence which proceeded from her here, still flow on to the praise and glory of her covenant God. O, that living, we might be like her, and like her when we are dead, may our memory also still glorify our Saviour.

Soon after the organization of the church it was proposed to erect a meeting house, and Mr. Edw. Richards gave the land on which this house now stands. Of the Building Committee of eight, which was chosen Aug. 23, 1835, the only member still with us is Mr. Geo. Craft. \$845 was subscribed here for the building; some two



hundred persons in eleven towns round about gave \$800, and in Boston large hearted friends of Christ subscribed about \$4000,00. The Ladies here, with some help from abroad, gave the pulpit which cost \$200. The communion table costing one-tenth as much, was the gift of a good Methodist Lady, now gone to her rest, (Mrs. Lucy Clark, sister of Mrs. E. Richards.) The chairs were presented by the wife of the oldest son of the mother in Israel, whose prayers and their results have just been mentioned. The old pulpit Bible now used in the chapel was the gift of one to whom this church owes a debt of gratitude for unwearied labors all the time she dwelt among us, and whose name needs no commendation to those that knew her, (Mrs. Lucy G., wife of Rev. C. Marsh) and the first communion service was given by the late Judge Hubbard, no less distinguished for his christian virtues than for his judicial integrity.

It is pleasant to look back and see how the good hand of God led so many streams of benevolence from so many different sources to water the first buddings of this new vine. But more than all other human instrumentalities, the unwearied toils of your late Pastor deserve grateful recollection. It was mainly through his personal exertions that these contributions were secured. Many a day, to save expense to the Parish, has he visited neighboring towns on foot and come home at night utterly exhausted with the labors of the day, and beside all this toil—the wearing nature of which is known only to those who have performed the like—out of his own scanty resources he gave \$200 of the \$845 originally subscribed

at home; and years after when \$977 were collected here to pay off the debt, \$300 of that also came from Mr. Marsh, while of the \$251 collected elsewhere at the same time for the same object, there was little I presume in the procuring of which he had not an active part. These facts seem due to the memory of a good man who labored so abundantly in laying these foundations, and then uncomplainingly gave place to a stranger just as the struggle for existence was passing into the pleasant course of a self sustaining life. If he ever engaged in other pursuits there was a need for his doing so. If he sometimes spoke of his labors here, he had labors whereof to speak. As we see him toiling at first for a salary of \$500, and afterwards not unfrequently donating \$100 of his income to the parish, and then leaving so scanty an inheritance to his children, it is a relief to think that God does not settle with his servants in silver and gold, but reserves for them a better and more enduring portion. May we profit by the lesson and not set our hearts on those lower things which no christian seeks, but to be mercifully disappointed.

The installation of Mr. Marsh, and the dedication of this house took place on the same day, May 17, 1837, and of all the members of the council, Dr. Blagden who again preached the sermon is the only one remaining in this vicinity. Dr. Codman who was moderator and gave the charge has been called home, and so has Mr. Boies who made the installing prayer.

It deserves mention here that the basement of this house was finished off as a Lecture room, and dedicated

on May 19, 1836, about one year before the meeting house, and though it seems too damp and unwholesome ever to have been used for religious worship, as it has not been since I came among you, and will not likely be again now that we have our pleasant and commodious chapel, yet it is a place made sacred in the memory of those who used to assemble in it, by the communion there enjoyed with God; showing us how little spiritual profit depends on external circumstances, and how grace can overcome all outward hindrances.

The first Deacons of this church were elected Feb. 28, 1839, and were set apart by prayer on May 5th of that year. Of these two, one left us in 1840; the other still remains the honored senior officer of this church.

It is no part of my design to trace the history of events down to the present; I have accomplished my object, if I have rescued a few of the first things from the oblivion in which they were ready to disappear.

Such as have been mentioned, suggest a few thoughts that may be for our instruction:

First. Some may have thought that we contribute too much to objects of benevolence, while others may have been ready to boast of our charities. It may do good to both classes—if such exist among us—to know that the whole amount given for the good of others since my coming among you does not equal by about \$500 the amount that others had previously expended upon us. Or if we add together all the known contributions of this church from the beginning, amounting to \$7362,—of which \$1017 was given previous to 1851—this exceeds

the sum received (\$6850) by only \$512, so that even at that rate it was only within the last year that we paid our honest debts.

Second. Such a review is fitted to relieve us of all anxiety about our labors being appreciated. Things look very different when viewed at the distance of a few years from what they did at the time of their occurrence. Little personal prejudices and temporary misunderstandings pass away like the dews of the morning while the real service done to Christ triumphs over the wrecks of time. Let us never be troubled about any misinterpretation of our conduct to-day, it will all be seen in its true light hereafter.

Third. It also shows us the narrowness of our field of view compared with that of God. With us the present crowds out all else; men now acting, events now occurring, fill up the horizon; but God takes in all the past and all the future. The laborers in his vineyard to-day, do not crowd out of sight those already gone to their reward. This is not overvalued, that is not overlooked, but all are seen alike, by him whose view of things shall recommend itself as the truth, to all intelligent beings forever. What a privilege to serve such a master; not that he cannot detect evil in us, but looking to the blood that atones for the past, and the grace that sanctifies in the ever shifting present, our joy is unmoved by the swell of the heaving sea of human passion and opinion.

Fourth. It is useless to try to control the character of any particular church after we are dead; we are



prone to think we can, but history corrects our overweening pride. Indeed the more we strive for the holiness and purity of any church while we live, the greater may be the reaction after we are gone. We may push the pendulum on the side of piety and truth, only to produce a more violent rebound in the opposite direction. Our arm is short; God alone can care for the future. Let us humbly seek to serve our generation as God's instruments in bringing sinners to Christ, and building them up in the knowledge of his truth, and leave future generations with the Lord. He liveth and abideth forever, and while he lives the church is safe. New forces are ever coming in along the ages, to baffle the most cunningly arranged safe guards that human skill ever contrived. Even an Apostle and he not a whit behind the very chiefest of them, was constrained to say, "I know that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of *your own selves* shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." So might John Eliot and Ebenezer Thayer have said, had their eyes been opened to the future history of the churches, they labored so stedfastly to establish in the truth.

Is it a vain thing then to stand up for Christ? No, never! As long as He is the corner stone of Zion, the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. But our pride constrains God sometimes to break the human line of succession, that all may see, that it is not by man, or through man,

but by the Lord alone, that his church is maintained from age to age. Man entrenches the truth behind what he deems impregnable ramparts; he exhausts science and skill in strengthening them against all attacks. But God allows all his barriers wherein he trusted to be broken down, while Christ's truth sits in the open field unharmed and immortal. Man builds a costly structure around the Shechinah, but when he glories in its marble walls and lofty roof, its goodly ornament and enduring strength, God leaves the splendid temple desolate, and removes the ark into some frail tent where despised men meet to worship God in spirit and in truth, that all ages may learn, it is not by might or by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.

Brethren in Christ! Let us walk humbly with God. Remember it is written, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Let us give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; even unto him who saith, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth, glory in this that he understandeth and knoweth me." So shall the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity dwell with us.

Let us often pray that the covenant which the Fathers made with God in this place, may come up in perpetual remembrance before the throne, that this candlestick of the Lord may never be removed out of its place, but that down to the second coming of Christ it may be said of this Zion, "This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the Lord will dwell in it forever." Amen.







Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: April 2006

**PreservationTechnologies**

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive  
Cranberry Township, PA 16066  
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 458 695 0





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 458 695 0

